

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4697
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
USMISSIN GENEVA
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USDOC WASHDC

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BEWT/USSR FOR HEISS

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: BTRA, CVIS, UR, ETRD, EAIR, CSCE
SUBJECT: SOVIETS TIGHTEN VISAS FOR RESIDENT REPS OF SEVERAL U.S.
FIRMS

REF: MOSCOW 873

SUMMARY: SINCE REPORT ON TIGHTENED VISA PRACTICES (REFTEL),
EMBASSY HAS HAD ADDITIONAL REPORTS OF MORE RESTRICTIVE VISA
POLICY. TWO FIRMS INDICATE SHORTENING OF TIME PERIOD DURING
WHICH EXIT PORTION OF 30-DAY SINGLE ENTRY/EXIT VISA MAY BE
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USED. SOVIETS CONTINUE TO DENY ONE-YEAR MULTIPLE ENTRY
VISA TO DUTCH CITIZEN WHO HEADS ONE U.S. FIRM, BUT MULTIPLE
ENTRY VISA HAS BEEN GRANTED TO SENIOR GE REP, WHO IS CANADIAN
CITIZEN. OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN CONSOFFS GIVE MIXED REPORTS
ON SOVIET VISA PRACTICES INVOLVING FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN.
END SUMMARY.

1. REPRESENTATIVES OF TWO ACCREDITED U.S. FIRMS IN MOSCOW HAVE COMPLAINED TO COMATT DIRECTLY IN RECENT DAYS OF A TIGHTENING BY SOVIETS OF TERMS OF SINGLE EXIT/REENTRY VISAS. ACCORDING TO H.J. VANLAAR, A DUTCH CITIZEN WHO MANAGES MOSCOW OFFICE OF ENGELHARD MINERALS & CHEMICALS CORP., AND DAN GARINE, A U.S. CITIZEN WHO IS DEPUTY HEAD OF OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM'S OFFICE IN MOSCOW, SOVIETS HAVE ADDED A NEW FEATURE TO THEIR VISAS WHICH AMOUNTS TO A SIGNIFICANT TIGHTENING OF EXIT/REENTRY PROVISIONS PREVIOUSLY APPLIED TO THEM. (IN CASE OF VANLAAR, SOVIETS HAVE STEADFASTLY REFUSED THUS FAR TO GRANT HIM A MULTIPLE ENTRY VISA VALID FOR ONE YEAR AS HAS BEEN THE CASE WITH HEADS OF OTHER U.S. COMPANY OFFICES, BECAUSE HE IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN. WE HAVE JUST HEARD FROM MR. PAUL LAPTEV, A CANADIAN CITIZEN AND ACCREDITED SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE OF GENERAL ELECTRIC'S MOSCOW OFFICE, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAS RECEIVED FOR FIRST TIME A SOVIET MULTIPLE ENTRY/EXIT VISA VALID FOR ONE YEAR.)

2. VANLAAR AND GARINE NOTED THAT SINCE FIRST OF THIS YEAR THEY, AND ONE OTHER THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONAL OXY REPRESENTATIVE, HAVE BEEN ISSUED SINGLE EXIT/REENTRY VISAS BY SOVIETS WHICH NOW CARRY STIPULATION REQUIRING THAT EXIT PORTION MUST BE UTILIZED BEFORE FIXED DATE SHOWN ON VISA. IN PAST, ACCORDING TO COMPANY REPS, VISAS HAD BEEN VALID FOR ONE EXIT AND REENTRY ANY TIME WITHIN THIRTY-DAY VALIDITY OF VISA. NOW, VISA ISSUED, SAY, ON FEB 24 VALID FOR THIRTY DAYS (OR THROUGH MARCH 26, 1977) WILL CARRY FIXED EARLIER DATE BEFORE WHICH BEARER MUST EXIT USSR, E.G., BY MARCH 6. THUS, VALIDITY OF ENTIRE VISA IS EFFECTIVELY REDUCED FROM THIRTY TO TEN DAYS. MOREOVER, SOVIETS REPORTEDLY NOW REQUIRE ENGELHARD AND OXY REPS TO DECLARE ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VISA APPLICATION EXACT POINT IN WEST TO WHICH THEY INTEND TO TRAVEL.

3. VANLAAR AND GARINE WERE ALSO CONCERNED OVER FACT THAT AT LEAST THREE WORKING DAYS ARE REQUIRED FROM DATE OF APPLYING FOR NEW VISA TO DATE OF ITS RECEIPT. THEIR NORMAL PRACTICE IN PAST WAS TO APPLY FOR NEW VISAS IMMEDIATELY UPON RETURNING FROM TRIP OUTSIDE USSR SO THAT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO TRAVEL AGAIN QUICKLY SHOULD PERSONAL OR CORPORATE BUSINESS DEMAND IT. NEW VISA PROVISION REDUCES THIS LEEWAY SINCE VISAS EFFECTIVELY NOW HAVE A MUCH SHORTER PERIOD OF EXPIRY, NECESSITATING A NEARLY CONTINUOUS TYING UP OF PASSPORTS AT MFT AS COMPANY REPS TRY TO KEEP VISAS ALWAYS VALID FOR EMERGENCY TRAVEL.

4. WHILE WE HAVE NOT HAD TIME TO CONDUCT FULL-SCALE SURVEY OF ALL RESIDENT U.S. FIRMS IN MOSCOW, WE HAVE RECEIVED CONFIRMATION FROM THREE OTHER FIRMS--INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER, HEWLETT-PACKARD AND GENERAL ELECTRIC- THAT THEY TOO ARE RECEIVING OR EXPECT IN FUTURE TO BE RECEIVING SINGLE EXIT-REENTRY SOVIET VISAS FOR ACCREDITED JUNIOR REPS--U.S. CITIZEN AND TCN, AS WELL-

WHICH CONTAIN RESTRICTIONS DISCUSSED ABOVE. WE SHOULD NOTE THAT SOVIET PRACTICE HAS VARIED REGARDING VISAS FOR ACCREDITED SENIOR AND JUNIOR REPS WHO DO NOT HOLD MULTIPLE ENTRY/EXIT VISAS. WHILE GARINE AND VANLAAR HAD GREATER FLEXIBILITY DESCRIBED ABOVE (AND FOR VANLAAR, STILL GREATER FLEXIBILITY DESCRIBED REFTTEL), SOME JUNIOR REPS RECEIVED VISAS VALID FOR EXIT ON ONE DAY ONLY. DESTINATION DECLARATION IS UGLY NEW WRINKLE, HOWEVER, WHICH CAN BE TROUBLESOME. IN ONE CASE WHICH HAS COME TO OUR ATTENTION, H-P REP WAS HELD UP AT AIRPORT BECAUSE HIS EXIT VISA READ "LONDON" AND HE HAD CHANGED PLANS TO GO TO VIENNA, INSTEAD. AFTER MISSING HIS FIRST FLIGHT TO VIENNA, AND SEVERAL HOURS OF HASSLE, HE WAS ABLE FINALLY TO LEAVE FOR ANOTHER CONNECTING POINT IN WESTERN EUROPE. SOVIET REQUIREMENT TO DECLARE CITY DESTINATIONS IN WEST ON VISA APPLICATION IS--APART FROM ITS PATENT ABSURDITY--UNPRECEDENTED IN EMBASSY EXPERIENCE.

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INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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5. CONSOFFS RAISED ISSUE OF VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR FOREIGN

BUSINESSMEN DURING BI-MONTHLY WESTERN EMBASSY CONSOFFS MEETING, HOSTED THIS TIME BY U.S. EMBASSY. DISCUSSION CENTERED AROUND NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES OF FOREIGN AIRLINES WHO RECEIVE MULTIPLE ENTRY/EXIT VISAS. FRENCH REPORT THAT ONLY TWO NOW RECEIVE MULTIPLE VISAS VICE SIX LAST YEAR, BUT THAT THIS IS BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT AND CORRESPONDS TO A SIMILAR RESTRICTION IN FRANCE. FINNISH CONSOFF INDICATED THAT MULTIPLE VISAS NOW RESTRICTED TO TWO FINNAIR EMPLOYEES. SWEDISH CONSOFF SAID THAT HIS EMBASSY HAD MADE SUCCESSFUL APPROACH TO MFA TO HAVE MULTIPLE VISAS RESTORED TO ALL FOUR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SCANDINAVIAN REPRESENTATIVES OF SAS, AFTER RESTRICTION TO TWO HAD BEEN IMPOSED (REFTEL). SWEDISH EMBASSY POINTED OUT TO MFA CONTRAST BETWEEN FACT THAT ALL FIFTEEN SOVIET AEROFLOT REPRESENTATIVES IN SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES WERE RECEIVING ONE YEAR MULTIPLE VISAS AND TWO OF FOUR SCANDINAVIAN SAS REPRESENTATIVES IN USSR WERE BEING RESTRICTED TO ONE MONTH SINGLE ENTRY/EXIT VISAS. IN RESTORING THE TWO MULTIPLE VISAS, SOVIETS SAID THAT THE WHOLE EPISODE WAS SIMPLY A MISTAKE MADE BY NEW EMPLOYEE.

6. AS INDICATED REFTTEL, THESE DEVELOPMENTS THROW INTO QUESTION SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT U.S. PROPOSAL THAT MULTIPLE ENTRY/EXIT VISAS BE RECIPROCALLY ISSUED TO ALL RESIDENT BUSINESSMEN ACCREDITED TO U.S.FIRMS. THE FACT THAT SOVIETS HAVE NOT YET INDICATED THEY ARE PREPARED TO RESUME CONSULAR TALKS MAY MEAN THAT THIS ISSUE IS STILL SUBJECT OF INTRA-GOVERNMENTAL BARGAINING. SWEDISH EXPERIENCE WITH SAS REPRESENTATIVES AND OUR RECENT EXPERIENCE WITH AMERICAN EXPRESS (MOSCOW 1728) INDICATE THAT WHEN MFA IS APPROACHED, MORE RESTRICTIVE POLICY CAN BE REVERSED, AT LEAST IN SOME CASES.

7. IN ADDITION TO GENERAL INTEREST IN CONTEXT OF CSCE AND US-SOVIET CONSULAR BILATERALS, WE BELIEVE THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT WILL BE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THOSE INVOLVED IN PREPARING AGENDA FOR JOINT COMMERCIAL COMMISSION MEETINGS. WE WILL, OF COURSE, REPORT FURTHER INFORMATION AS WE ACQUIRE IT. TOON

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Message Attributes

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